

Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

FY 2009 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 9, 2009



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVE

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.307, Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

DATES: Applications must be accepted by Grants.gov by close of business (COB) on **March 9, 2009 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) requests comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice, above.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) for fiscal year (FY) 2009 to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research and extension activities. OREI funds research and extension programs that enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2009 is approximately \$17.3 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for OREI projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an OREI

grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

*******Please Read*******

Important Information Regarding Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative Policies and Procedures

*******Please Read*******

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative does not fund farming operations or start-up businesses. Applications proposing either of these activities will not be accepted for review.

Required Data Search: The Current Research Information System (CRIS) is the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's](#) documentation and reporting system for ongoing and recently completed research and education projects in agriculture, food and nutrition, and forestry. Projects are conducted or sponsored by USDA research agencies, state agricultural experiment stations, land-grant universities, other cooperating state institutions, and participants in CSREES-administered grant programs. The body of scientific information on organic agricultural systems is growing rapidly. Many of the research programs creating this information have been funded recently by CSREES. This information is not mature enough to appear in refereed journals and often the results are only available through the annual CRIS reports that must be filed by each Project Director. Therefore, completion of a CRIS data search is **REQUIRED** for all proposals submitted to the OREI. There is also a requirement that a description of the search parameters used in conducting the CRIS data search be included in the proposal and labeled Appendix A. Applicants must not include the results of the CRIS search in Appendix A (see Part IV. B. (f)). That information should be summarized in the Introduction of the proposal. This will allow review panel members to ascertain whether a complete search had been accomplished. Applications that do not describe and report on the CRIS data search will not be reviewed. Further, applications that simply list all retrieved information in Appendix A and do not provide a summary in the Introduction will not be reviewed.

Support of Long-Term Projects: Applicants who wish to be considered for funding as advanced, on-farm, long-term projects **MUST REQUEST 48 MONTHS OF FUNDING AND SPECIFICALLY STATE IN THE INTRODUCTION THAT THE PROPOSAL IS A LONG-TERM PROJECT.**

Project Director's Workshop: It is the intent of the OREI to require successful applicants to attend at least one Project Directors' Workshop during the term of their project. These workshops may be held in conjunction with another conference where producers and processors or other researchers who may be interested in developing a program addressing organic farming issues may be in attendance. However, the Project Directors' workshops may be held separate from any other meeting. For the purposes of budget development, applicants are required to request funds for attendance at least one such workshop. The request for these funds should be clearly indicated in the budget narrative section of the application.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 7206 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) amended section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade (FACT) Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925b) amending and re-authorizing the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). The FACT Act, as amended, authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB), to make competitive grants to support research and extension activities regarding organically grown and processed agricultural commodities for eight legislatively-defined goals (see Part I B of this RFA).

B. Purpose and Priorities

The OREI seeks to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research and extension activities.

The purpose of this program is to fund research and extension projects that will enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. These funds shall be allocated for high priority aspects of organic agricultural systems research and extension. Priority concerns include biological, physical, and social sciences, including economics.

OREI has eight legislatively-defined goals. Applicants are encouraged to develop proposals which give consideration to as many of the following legislatively-defined goals as feasible:

1. Facilitating the development of organic agriculture production, breeding, and processing methods.
2. Evaluating the potential economic benefits to producers and processors who use organic methods.
3. Exploring international trade opportunities for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities.
4. Determining desirable traits for organic commodities.
5. Identifying marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture.
6. Conducting advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to production and marketing and to socioeconomic conditions.
7. Examining optimal conservation and environmental outcomes relating to organically produced agricultural products.

8. Developing new and improved seed varieties that are particularly suited for organic agriculture.

The OREI is particularly interested in projects that emphasize research and outreach that assist farmers and ranchers with whole farm planning and ecosystem integration. Projects should plan to deliver applied production information to producers. Applicants should describe how the results of their research and extension programs will improve the ability of stakeholders to develop an Organic System Plan. Fieldwork must be done on certified organic land or on land in transition to organic certification, as appropriate to project goals and objectives. Refer to the USDA National Organic Program (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>) for organic production standards.

Clinical trials investigating animal health issues need not be done in a certified organic setting. However, where animal management can play a pivotal role in the response of the animal to the proposed intervention (as might be the case when considering pasture-raised animals versus those in contained animal feeding operations (CAFO)) animals that have been raised under organic standards should be used in the trials.

Priorities for FY 2009:

Applications are being solicited for the OREI under the following areas. Priorities 1 through 5 will be given *highest priority* in FY 2009.

1. Conduct advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to animal and crop production and marketing and socioeconomic conditions.
2. Develop and demonstrate education and information training systems designed as education tools for county Cooperative Extension personnel and other agricultural professionals who advise producers regarding organic practices. This could include sharing or developing information on a national or regional level regarding pest mitigation, soil fertility building, best organic cultural practices, production and risk budgeting and planning, best marketing practices, livestock management, and cataloging animal health problems for various species and listing approved health care options and allowed medications. Applications that propose to bring end-users together with research and extension teams that have been funded by the OREI will be considered.
3. Examine post-harvest handling and processing practices to increased shelf-life of fresh products, increased yield of processed products, and increased food safety.
4. Conduct research to determine the amount of carbon sequestration that occurs in organically managed systems as compared to conventionally managed systems.

5. Catalog and characterize germplasm from heirloom cultivars of vegetable crops to determine the best potential parents for advanced breeding programs leading to new cultivars that are uniquely suited to organic management systems.
6. Develop and improve programs to address pest and pest-related problems to strengthen the livestock and crop systems approach of organic agriculture, including the effects of soil biology, cover crops, crop rotations, and crop/livestock integration on crop and livestock health and productivity and animal nutrient programs.
7. Identify the relationship of applied organic fertility management to crop health and the resistance of crops to pests and diseases as well as on livestock health and nutrition.
8. Identify those traits that make organic products unique compared to products produced by conventional methods.

Additionally, OREI strongly encourages applicants to develop partnerships that include collaboration with: (1) small- or mid-sized, accredited colleges and universities; and/or (2) 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions, and/or other institutions that serve high-risk, under-served, or hard-to-reach audiences or (3) international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges that contribute to solving or solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems in the U.S.

C. Program Area Description

CSREES expects that applicants will consult with organic producers and/or processors before developing project applications. Producers and/or processors should play an important role in developing project goals and objectives; in implementing the experimental or extension plan; and in evaluating and disseminating project results and outcomes. Farmers and others with little training or experience in developing and implementing research and outreach projects should consult with appropriate specialists. These specialists might include university scientists and Extension personnel or production consultants with scientific training. Projects must involve work that is necessary, both in terms of stakeholder preferences and the magnitude of the problem. There is an expectation that a local and/or regional advisory panel will inform the program throughout its life, including the identification and prioritization of research, and extension objectives. An outcome-oriented plan for disseminating information derived from project work must be an integral part of the project.

While it is desirable that extension materials be developed for organic systems, it has not been demonstrated that traditional extension methods suit the needs of organic producers and processors. Projects with the goal of developing extension information for organic agriculture should consider testing a number of delivery systems and methods as appropriate for the information.

The following websites may serve as useful information resources in developing OREI applications:

- National Organic Program (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/>);

- Organic Farming Research Foundation (<http://www.ofrf.org/scoar/overview.html>);
- National Organic Standards Board (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/index.htm>); and
- CSREES Organic Agriculture page <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/organicagriculture>.

The OREI encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (http://about.extension.org/mediawiki/files/5/51/EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY_-_March_14%2C_2006_-_YEAR_2.pdf). This content is for end users, as opposed to staff development, and must align with the eXtension Implementation Plan (available at <http://about.extension.org/wiki/Planning>). Since the eOrganic Community of Practice already exists, applicants wishing to develop content on organic agriculture for eXtension must demonstrate coordination of effort with eOrganic. For information about the eOrganic Community of Practice, applicants interested in developing content concerning organic agriculture for eXtension should contact Alexandra Stone.

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PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. It is anticipated that approximately \$17.3 million will be available in FY 2009.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2009, applications may be submitted to the OREI as one of the following two types of requests:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the OREI. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the OREI but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary in the Project Narrative (see Part IV B of this RFA). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

(1) Integrated Project Proposals: Integrated project applications may involve a combination of research and extension activities, with the provision that every project must include both components. Project periods and suggested ranges for funding requests appear in the table at the end of this section.

(2) Conference Proposals: Meetings that bring together scientists and others, including end-users, to identify research or extension needs, update information, or advance understanding of organic issues and problems. Conference awards cannot exceed \$50,000, and are not renewable. These activities can take the form of workshops or symposia. Conferences intended to provide current information to farmers and ranchers should be held in conjunction with meetings that are regularly attended by organic producers and processors. It is expected that conferences supported by the OREI will occur within 12 months of awards being made.

(3) Research and Extension Planning Proposals: Planning proposals are intended to provide assistance to applicants in the development of quality future Integrated OREI proposals. Priority will be given to applicants who: (1) can demonstrate limited resources for submitting large grant applications, (2) articulate anticipated benefits accrued from formal planning activities, and (3) submit applications containing evidence of a high likelihood that quality future applications will be submitted for Integrated OREI projects. Applications are encouraged to budget for planning meetings that bring together scientists and others, including end-users and technology providers,

to identify research and/or extension needs, update information, and advance understanding of specialty crop issues and problems. This information must be used to build teams that can develop applications to address the identified challenges using a systems-based focus. Applicants should be careful to document that planning meeting participants will represent a broad range of expertise by detailing the types of participants who will be invited.

Research and Extension Planning Proposal awards will not exceed \$50,000, and are not renewable. It is expected that planning activities supported by this program will occur within 12 months of awards being issued. Proposals must demonstrate measurable, cost effective benefits from any proposed planning activities requested.

Awards will be made as standard grants or continuation grants. Standard grants are instruments by which CSREES agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period without any statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date. Under certain circumstances, CSREES may determine that it will support continuation awards. A continuation grant is an instrument by which CSREES agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, funds are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal government and the public. CSREES is under no obligation to award a continuation grant and should CSREES decide to make such an award, the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) must make an affirmative decision to do so.

Applicants should decide which priority is best suited to the objectives of their proposed project and develop a budget that fits the objectives. The suggested range for funding requests are intended only as a guide and some degree of deviation will not result in a failure to review the proposal.

Project Types (<i>see Part II C of this RFA for more information</i>)	Project Periods	Anticipated Grant Types	Suggested Range for Funding Requests	Priorities to Address in FY 2009 Applications
Integrated Project Proposals	1-3 years	Standard or Continuation	\$50,000 to \$3,000,000	Any Priority 1-8
Integrated Project Proposals – <i>Long Term</i>	4 years	Continuation	\$50,000 to \$3,000,000	Priority 1 only
Conference Proposals	1 year	Standard	\$0 to \$50,000	Any Priority 1-8
Research and Extension Planning Proposals	1 year	Standard	\$0 to \$50,000	Any Priority 1-8

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply for and receive a grant under this subpart.

1. State agricultural experiment stations;
2. colleges and universities;
3. university research foundations;
4. other research institutions and organizations;
5. Federal agencies;
6. national laboratories;
7. private organizations or corporations;
8. individuals who are United States citizens or nationals; or
9. any group consisting of 2 or more of the entities described in subparagraphs (1) through (8).

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in CSREES not accepting the application, or even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude CSREES from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

(1) General Requirement

The Secretary shall require the recipient of a grant under this section to provide funds or in-kind support from non-Federal sources in an amount at least equal to the amount provided by the Federal Government. See R&R Budget section regarding matching funds Part IV, B., 6. of this RFA for more details.

(2) Waiver

CSREES may waive the matching funds requirement specified in the above paragraph for a grant if CSREES determines that (a) the results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or (b) the project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to CSREES in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) (also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for CSREES Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**,” enter the funding opportunity number USDA-CSREES-ICGP-002012 in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

- Grants.gov customer support
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726
Business Hours: Monday through Friday 7:00 am – 9:00 pm Eastern Standard Time
Email: support@grants.gov

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM CSREES REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from CSREES review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 6. on the Form). The Project Summary is limited to **250 words. For Integrated Project Proposals:** The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the OREI. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. **For Conference Proposals and Research and Extension Planning Project Proposals:** State the objectives of the conference, symposium, workshop, or planning activity as well as the proposed location and probable inclusive date(s) of the conference.

b. Project Narrative (Field 7. on the Form).

For Integrated Project Proposals: the Project Narrative section may not exceed a total of 21 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables. The Introduction may not exceed six pages, and the rest of the Project Narrative may not exceed 15 pages.

For Conference Proposals and Research and Extension Planning Project Proposals: the Project Narrative section may not exceed a total of 7 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables.

These page limitations apply regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation **may not be reviewed**. These maximums have been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

(i) Resubmitted applications must provide a detailed response to the previous review. The response should be as concise as possible, but there is no limit to the number of pages that may be submitted. The response to the previous review **is not** counted against the page limit of the Project Narrative. A CSREES issued proposal number *must* be included in the response to the previous review.

(ii) As the first page (or more as needed) of the project narrative of new applications or immediately following the response to the previous review of resubmitted applications, all applications must include the following information in a combined executive summary and table of contents (table format preferred). The executive summary and table of contents does not count toward the narrative's page limitation. Applications without an executive summary will **NOT** be considered for funding.

1. Project title
2. Project type (see Part II C of this RFA)
3. List the legislatively-defined goals being addressed (see Part I B. of this RFA), and provide an estimate of the percentage of effort/funds dedicated to each (sum of percentages should equal 100 percent).
4. Program Staff – include name, title, affiliation, address, and e-mail for PD(s), Co-PD(s) and Key Personnel.
5. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing the critical stakeholder need addressed by the project and the project's long-term goals (provide cross-references to full descriptions in the narrative).
6. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) of the outreach plan proposed by the project (provide a cross-reference to the full description in the narrative).
7. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing potential economic, social, and environmental benefits (Who benefits and how?).
8. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing stakeholder engagement throughout the project (provide a cross-reference to the full description in the narrative).

(iii) Introduction. List the following:

1. Provide a clear statement of the long-term goal(s), the critical need(s) of organic agriculture being addressed, and supporting outreach objectives.
2. Describe how stakeholders were engaged to identify project goals and objectives, and as appropriate how stakeholder involvement will continue.
3. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project.
4. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Applications should also demonstrate how duplication of effort with similar activities by others will be avoided. Briefly summarize the required CRIS data search (see PLEASE READ section page 4 and Part IV B. (f) of this RFA).
5. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed work should be included in this section. All works cited should be referenced and attached at Field 8 on the Form, Bibliography & Reference Cited. Refer to Part V, 4.8 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

(iv) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. The specific relationship of the project's objectives to one or more of the OREI priorities for 2009 should be shown clearly. These purposes and priority areas are described under Part I, B, Purpose and Priorities. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.

(v) Approach. The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

1. A description of the activities proposed, key personnel or institution roles in those activities, and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
2. Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods;
3. Expected outcomes, including how the project expects to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of organic agriculture;
4. Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
5. How results or products will be used;
6. Outreach plan: including, where appropriate, science-based tools disseminated, participants involved in delivery, and how impacts will be measured;
7. Pitfalls that may be encountered;
8. Limitations to proposed procedures; and
9. A full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards.

c. Other Attachments (Field 11. on the Form) - Required CRIS Data Search. Provide detailed description of search parameters used in conducting the CRIS data search. Title and save the attachment file as "Appendix A".

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

5. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V, 6. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. If completing the information, **do not enter any data in the field requesting the social security number.**

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

Matching. If an applicant concludes that matching funds are not required (as specified under Part III, B.), a justification should be included in the Budget Narrative. CSREES will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements. CSREES retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those projects where matching funds are required (as specified under Part III, B.), applications shall include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and fair market value of in-kind contributions) from third parties (non-federal sources) in an amount at least equal to the amount awarded by the Federal government. Written verification means:

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized representative of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

The sources and the amount of all matching support from outside the applicant organization should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application as a part of the Budget Justification attachment (see Field K on the Form SF 424 (R&R) Budget). Additionally, all pledge agreements must be included as a PDF attachment in Field K as well.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions; A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments; A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations; 2 CFR Part 215, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-110); and the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulation at 48 CFR 31.2 for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

Additional Budget Information

For Conference Proposals and Research and Extension Planning Project Proposals: These budgets may include appropriate amounts for transportation and subsistence costs for participants and for other allowable costs. These awards cannot exceed \$50,000 and are not renewable. Include an itemized breakdown of all support requested in the Budget Justification (Field K. of the R&R Budget).

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). *FOR ALL OREI APPLICATIONS* - Enter the program code name “OREI” and the program code “113.A”.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be accepted by Grants.gov by COB on **March 9, 2009 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from CSREES** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of the application deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

CSREES has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act amended section 1462 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310), increasing the limit on recovery of indirect costs from 19 percent to 22 percent of total Federal funds provided under the award. Therefore, the recovery of indirect costs on awards made by CSREES

under this program area may not exceed the lesser of the institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.”

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Proposal Relevance (50 points):

For Integrated Applications:

- (a)** Documented need. Application includes documentation substantiating that project is directed to current and likely future problems/challenges in organic agriculture(15 points);
- (b)** Stakeholder involvement. Application includes information on how stakeholders were selected and how their input was solicited and incorporated. There is an expectation that a local and/or regional advisory panel will inform the program throughout its life (10 points);
- (c)** Outreach plan. Application includes a detailed outreach plan that includes deliverables and a description of how impacts will be measured (10 points);
- (d)** Potential for project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of organic production or marketing systems (10 points); and

(e) Importance of the commodity or production system or importance of constraints (marketing/environmental/other) and resulting impacts on the production system. Potential for project to make a difference (5 points).

For Conference Proposals and Research and Extension Planning Proposals:

(a) Demonstrated Need: Justification of conference or planning activity proposed (15 points);

(b) Adequacy of background research: Listing of recent meetings or outreach activities on the same subject with dates and locations (10 points);

(c) Stakeholder involvement: Application includes names and organizational affiliations of the chair and other members of the organizing committee or planning team members, including information on how stakeholders were selected, how their input was solicited and incorporated, and a description of their future involvement in the project (10 points);

(d) Quality of proposed program (or agenda) for the conference or planning activity, including a listing of scheduled participants, their institutional affiliations, and a description of their expertise (10 points); and

(e) Importance of the commodity or production system or importance of constraints (marketing/environmental/other) and resulting impacts on the production system. Potential for project to make a difference (5 points).

2. Proposal Quality (50 points):

For Integrated Applications and for Conference Proposals and Research and Extension Planning Proposals:

(a) Conceptual adequacy. Application clearly states objectives which are potentially attainable within project time, scope and budget (10 points) ;

(b) Approach. The proposed method and approach are appropriate to project objectives (15 points);

(c) Involvement of appropriate, relevant expertise (5 points);

(d) Experience of key project personnel (5 points);

(e) Appropriateness of budget (5 points);

(f) Feasibility, probability of success (5 points); and

(g) Adherence to guidelines (5 points).

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3430, 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR and Part 215 of 2 CFR).

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

2 CFR Part 215—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR Part 3430 – CSREES Competitive and Noncompetitive Nonformula Grant Programs—General Grant Administrative Provisions.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to submit annual and summary progress reports via CSREES' Current Research Information System (CRIS). CRIS is an electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Tom Bewick; National Program Leader; Plant and Animal Systems; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2220; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2220; telephone: (202) 401-3356; fax: (202) 401-4888; e-mail: tbewick@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of

amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

For the purpose of awarding grants under this program, the following definitions are applicable:

1862 Land-Grant Institution means an institution eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862, as amended (7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.). Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

1890 Land-Grant Institution means one of those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890, as amended (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University. Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

1994 Land-Grant Institution means one of those institutions as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended (7 U.S.C. 301 note). These institutions are commonly referred to as Tribal Colleges or Universities.

Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the CSREES to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Advisory Board means the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (as established under section 1408 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3123), as amended.

Agricultural research means research in the food and agricultural sciences.

Applied research means research that includes expansion of the findings of fundamental research to uncover practical ways in which new knowledge can be advanced to benefit individuals and society.

Authorized Departmental Officer or ADO means the Secretary or any employee of the Department with delegated authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized Representative or AR means the President or Chief Executive Officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the President or Chief Executive Officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization to the project.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Cash contribution means the recipient's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the recipient by non-Federal third parties.

Citizen or national of the United States means (1) A citizen or native resident of a State; or, (2) A person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. When eligibility is claimed solely on the basis of permanent allegiance, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to CSREES upon request.

College or university means, unless defined in a separate subpart, an educational institution in any State which:

- (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- (4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

Department means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Extension means informal education program conducted in the States in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture.

Extension activity means an act or process that delivers science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Food and agricultural sciences The term "food and agricultural sciences" means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following:

- (1) Animal health, production, and well-being.
- (2) Plant health and production.
- (3) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation.
- (4) Aquaculture.
- (5) Food safety.
- (6) Soil and water conservation and improvement.
- (7) Forestry, horticulture, and range management.
- (8) Nutritional sciences and promotion.
- (9) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability.
- (10) Home economics.
- (11) Rural human ecology.
- (12) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs.
- (13) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis.
- (14) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture.
- (15) Biotechnology related to agriculture.
- (16) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

Grant means the award by the Authorized Departmental Officer of funds to an eligible grantee to assist in meeting the costs of conducting for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in the program solicitation or RFA.

Grantee means the organization designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Integrated means to incorporate the research and extension components of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., research, education, and extension) around a problem area or activity. In general, integrated projects will be stakeholder driven, problem focused, and outcome oriented.

Land-grant Institutions means the 1862 Land-Grant Institutions, 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, and 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.

Matching or cost sharing means that portion of allowable project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of in-kind contributions.

Merit review means an evaluation of a proposed project or elements of a proposed program whereby the technical quality and relevance to regional or national goals are assessed.

Merit reviewers means peers and other individuals with expertise appropriate to conduct merit review of a proposed project.

Methodology means the project approach to be followed.

National laboratories include Federal laboratories that are government-owned contractor-operated or government-owned government-operated.

Organic System Plan means a plan of management of an organic production or handling operation that has been agreed to by the producer or handler and the certifying agent and that includes written plans concerning all aspects of agricultural production or handling described by the National Organic Program.

Peer reviewers means experts or consultants qualified by training and experience to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of grant applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the application evaluation criteria. Peer reviewers may be ad-hoc or convened as a panel.

Prior approval means written approval by an Authorized Departmental Officer evidencing prior consent.

Private sector means all non-public entities, including for-profit and nonprofit commercial and non-commercial entities, and including private or independent educational associations.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

Project Director or PD means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer who is responsible for the direction and management of the project, also known as a Principal Investigator (PI) for research activities.

Project period means the total length of time, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Research means any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

Scientific peer review is an evaluation of the technical quality of a proposed project and its relevance to regional or national goals, performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed research work.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

State means any one of the fifty States, the District of Columbia, and the insular areas.

Third party in-kind contributions means the value of non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a funded project or program.

Under Secretary means the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics.

United States means the several States, the District of Columbia, and the insular areas.